

Common Name: **Saltmarsh Topminnow**



Scientific Name: *Fundulus jenkinsi*

Area of Concern: Western Atlantic: Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida

Year First Listed as a “Species of Concern”: 1997

Species Description:

The saltmarsh topminnow is one of the smallest members of the topminnow/killifish family (Fundulidae), seldom exceeding 40-45 mmTL, with most individuals in scientific collections ranging from 25 to 35 mm TL. Females become larger than males. This species breeds (March - August) and feeds in shallow flooded marshes and can withstand a wide range of salinity. While the life history of this species is poorly known, previous study suggests that this species may be close to an annual species with few adults surviving past breeding during their second year of life. Larvae have been located between May and June; young are found in July. This species can also be found in shallow tidal meanders of *Spartina* marshes.

Rationale for “Species of Concern” Listing:

Demographic and Diversity Concerns:

The species is endemic to the north-central coast of the Gulf of Mexico, from Galveston Bay, TX, eastward through LA, MS, AL and parts of western FL. It has been suggested that individuals can be found in the Perdido, Escambia, and East Bays of FL.

Factors for decline:

Habitat alteration is the most serious threat to the saltmarsh topminnow. In areas associated with the lower Mississippi River delta system, land loss from coastal erosion is decreasing the marsh habitat of this species. Conversion of marsh to deeper, open water eliminates the marsh surface that, when flooded, provides important feeding, shelter, and breeding areas. Erosion of marsh areas on several of Louisiana’s barrier islands has completely eliminated several locations where this species was collected in the past. Hurricane George (1998) further reduced available saltmarsh habitat. Success of ongoing programs designed to restore coastal marsh to provide habitat for the saltmarsh topminnow has not been determined.

Status Reviews/Research Completed or Underway:

In 1998 NMFS, via Recovery Protected Species funds, funded a status review of saltmarsh topminnow. More information is needed before before NMFS can determine whether the species is threatened or endangered.

For further information on this Species of Concern, or on the Species of Concern Program in general, please contact Ms. Marta Nammack, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, (301)713-1401, Marta.Nammack@noaa.gov ; or Dr. Stephania Bolden, NMFS, Southeast Region, Protected Resources Division, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702, (727)570-5312, Stephania.Bolden@noaa.gov.

References:

Robins, C.R. and G.C. Ray, and J. Douglass. 1986. A field guide to Atlantic coast fishes of North America. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, U.S.A.

Thompson, B.A. *Fundulus jenkinsi*, Saltmarsh Topminnow. Draft status review for the National Marine Fisheries

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Service; Baton Rouge, LA. 1998.

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